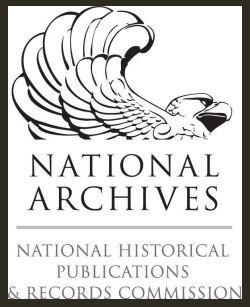
It Never Hurts to Ask: Archival Surveys as Tools to Enhance Electronic Records Practices

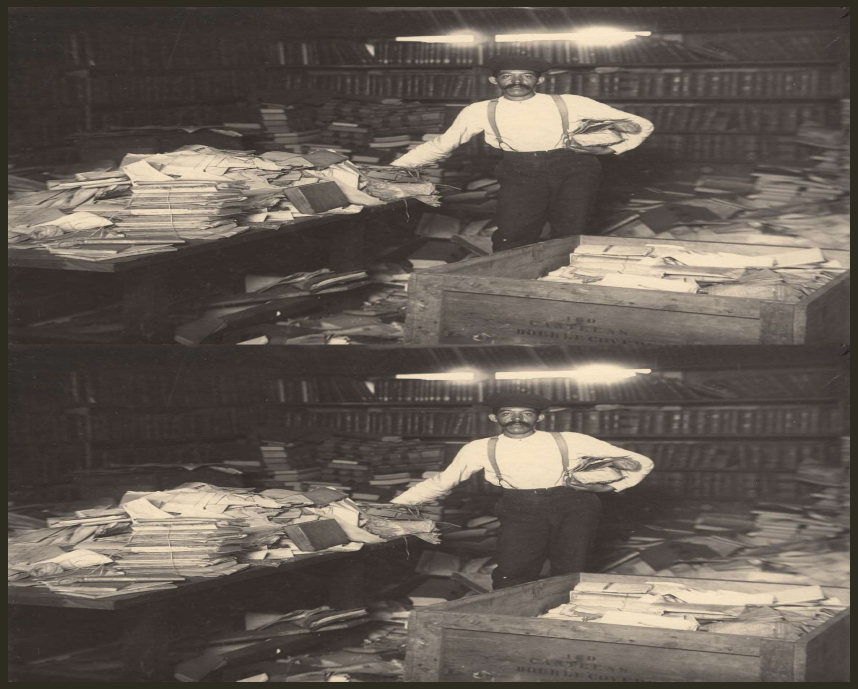


Best Practices Exchange
2017

STATE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY ESTABLISHED 1901

George Doak moving archival records in the Capitol basement, ca. 1901



Archives Director Tom Owen sorting archival records in the Capitol basement, ca. 1901

WHAT WE'RE GOING TO COVER TODAY

- Intro to Alabama State Electronic Records Project (ASERP)
- ASERP Survey Process
- ASERP Survey Benefits

WHAT IS ASERP?

- Three year grant project funded by NHPRC

- Started in January 2017

- ADAH working to enhance electronic records management, transfer, preservation, processing and access protocols

- ADAH coordinating and collaborating with Office of the Governor on project

WHY A SURVEY FIRST?

- Importance of listening and getting input from stakeholders
- Meet all the people!
- I was new, and this was a task I had experience with

SURVEY PROCESS

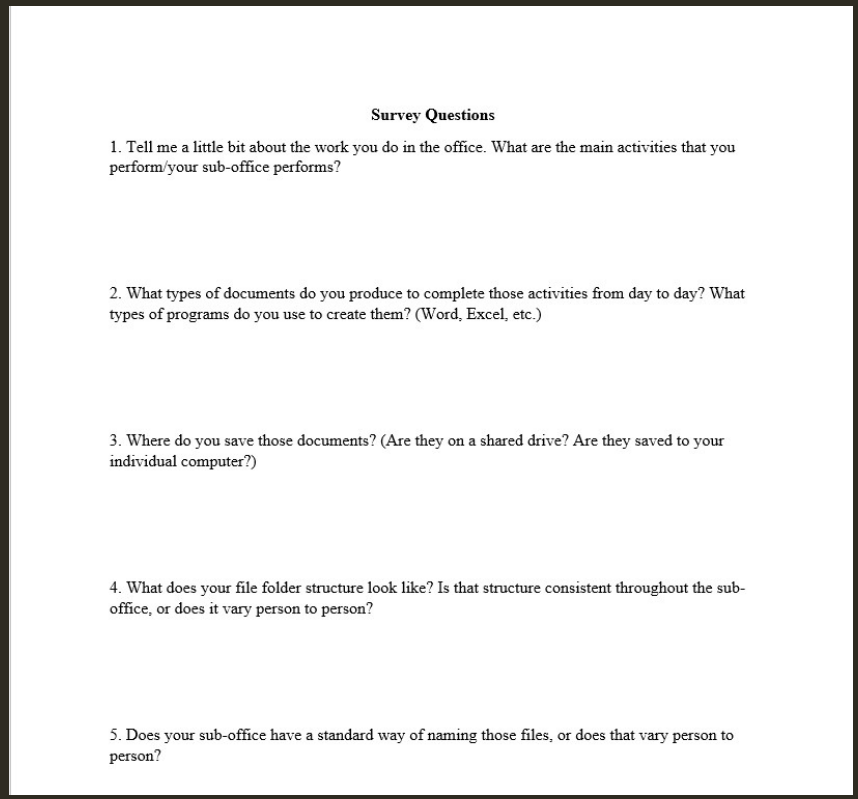
1. Developed Questions in Advance
2. Agency Records Liaison Sent Email
3. Scheduled Meetings During Legislative Break
4. Conducted in-person interviews of 30 minutes to 1.5 hours
5. Typed notes
6. Analyzed content and process

QUESTION EXAMPLES

Open-ended: Tell me about the work you do in the office.

Specific Technologies: Do you use Google Docs?
Do you text for work?

Locations: Do you use a laptop for work? Do you save those files just to the laptop?



Survey Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about the work you do in the office. What are the main activities that you perform/your sub-office performs?

2. What types of documents do you produce to complete those activities from day to day? What types of programs do you use to create them? (Word, Excel, etc.)

3. Where do you save those documents? (Are they on a shared drive? Are they saved to your individual computer?)

4. What does your file folder structure look like? Is that structure consistent throughout the sub-office, or does it vary person to person?

5. Does your sub-office have a standard way of naming those files, or does that vary person to person?

SURVEY PROCESS

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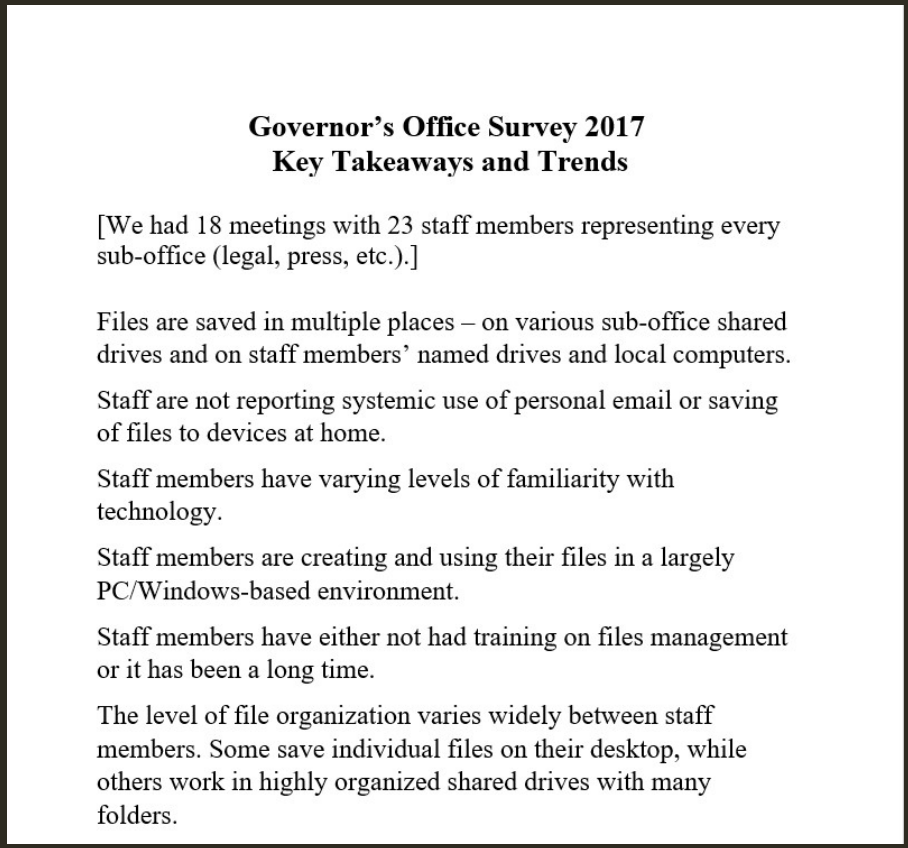
CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Files saved multiple places
- No standardized naming convention throughout office
- File organization varied widely
- What to do with records on departure
- Not reporting systemic use of personal email



Governor's Office Survey 2017
Key Takeaways and Trends

[We had 18 meetings with 23 staff members representing every sub-office (legal, press, etc.).]

Files are saved in multiple places – on various sub-office shared drives and on staff members' named drives and local computers.

Staff are not reporting systemic use of personal email or saving of files to devices at home.

Staff members have varying levels of familiarity with technology.

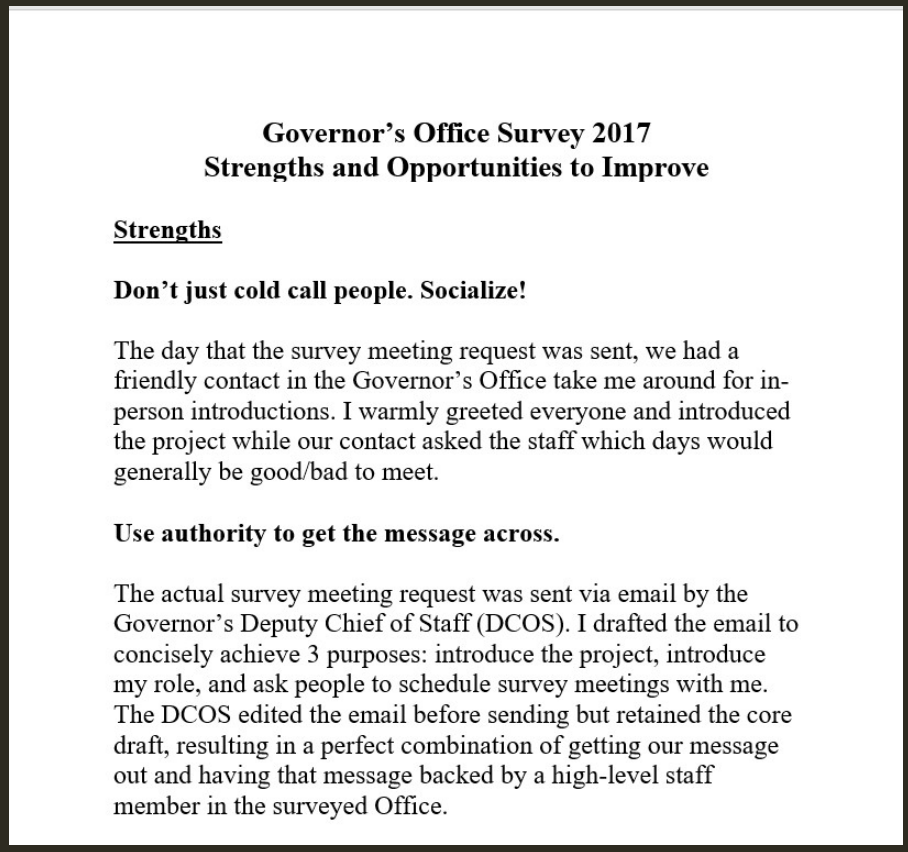
Staff members are creating and using their files in a largely PC/Windows-based environment.

Staff members have either not had training on files management or it has been a long time.

The level of file organization varies widely between staff members. Some save individual files on their desktop, while others work in highly organized shared drives with many folders.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

- Can't say this enough: write questions in advance
- Notetaking can be a challenge
- Be careful with scheduling
- Follow up!
- IT staff are your friends



Governor's Office Survey 2017
Strengths and Opportunities to Improve

Strengths

Don't just cold call people. Socialize!

The day that the survey meeting request was sent, we had a friendly contact in the Governor's Office take me around for in-person introductions. I warmly greeted everyone and introduced the project while our contact asked the staff which days would generally be good/bad to meet.

Use authority to get the message across.

The actual survey meeting request was sent via email by the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS). I drafted the email to concisely achieve 3 purposes: introduce the project, introduce my role, and ask people to schedule survey meetings with me. The DCOS edited the email before sending but retained the core draft, resulting in a perfect combination of getting our message out and having that message backed by a high-level staff member in the surveyed Office.

SURVEY BENEFITS

GOV. BENTLEY'S RESIGNATION

SEARCH

The New York Times

Boston History

16 Troops Died in Mississippi Plane Crash, Marines Say

Strategy for Democratic Mayors Facing Troubles: Attack Trump

Trump Jr. Was Told in Email of Russian Effort to Aid Campaign

U.S. Is Investigating Jane Sanders Over Burlington College Bank Loan

PAID POST: PERU
The World's Top Food Destination Isn't What You Think

U.S.

Robert Bentley, Alabama Governor, Resigns Amid Scandal

By ALAN BLINDER APRIL 10, 2017

Gov. Robert Bentley of Alabama before a news conference on Friday outside the State Capitol in Montgo
He has said he did not break the law. Albert Cesare/The Montgomery Advertiser, via Associated Press

PBS NEWSHOUR

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A BLOG OF NEWS AND INSIGHT

HEALTH SUPREME COURT VOTE 2016

POLITICS

Why Alabama's governor resigned — and what's next

369

EMAIL

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS *April 11, 2017 at 11:24 AM EDT*

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley announces his resignation April 10 amid impeachment proceedings on accusations stemming from his relationship with a former aide in Montgomery, Alabama. Photo by REUTERS/Marvin Gentry.

Life Insurance Made Easy

Slatest YOUR NEWS COMPANION APRIL 10 2017 9:22 PM

Slate

Alabama Governor Resigns Over Sex Scandal With Top Aide

By Elliot Hannon

1.2k 95 189

vernor Robert Bentley appears in a booking photo after pleading guilty to
eanor crimes of violating campaign finance rules on April 10, 2017 in
, AL.

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office via Getty Images

Robert Bentley managed to hold onto his job for a full year after
tol in Montgomery exploded with the news of his romantic
vith a top aide, but, on Monday, with allies in the statehouse fleeing
riminal charges in the offing, the 74-year-old Republican
offering his resignation, pleading guilty to two misdemeanor

Life Insurance Made Easy

MetLife Rapid Term Life Insurance
Simple Application
Customized to Your Needs

MetLife

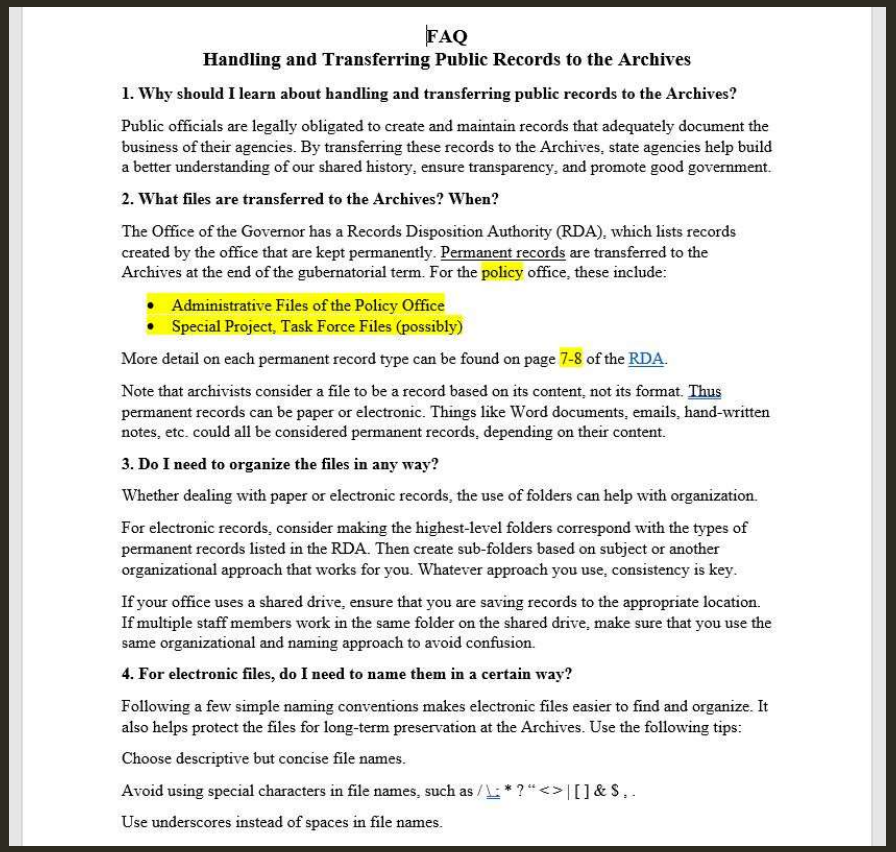
GET MY QUOTE

GOV. BENTLEY'S RECORDS TRANSFER

- Had already built relationships with Governor's Office staff members
- Provided instructions for paper and electronic records transmittal procedures
- Utilized information from the survey meetings about current records practices
- Partnered with IT department

TAILORED GUIDANCE DEVELOPMENT

- Needed to update procedural leaflets
- Wanted to tailor these documents to each office
- Our goal was to be concise and relevant



FAQ
Handling and Transferring Public Records to the Archives

1. Why should I learn about handling and transferring public records to the Archives?

Public officials are legally obligated to create and maintain records that adequately document the business of their agencies. By transferring these records to the Archives, state agencies help build a better understanding of our shared history, ensure transparency, and promote good government.

2. What files are transferred to the Archives? When?

The Office of the Governor has a Records Disposition Authority (RDA), which lists records created by the office that are kept permanently. Permanent records are transferred to the Archives at the end of the gubernatorial term. For the policy office, these include:

- Administrative Files of the Policy Office
- Special Project, Task Force Files (possibly)

More detail on each permanent record type can be found on page 7-8 of the RDA.

Note that archivists consider a file to be a record based on its content, not its format. Thus permanent records can be paper or electronic. Things like Word documents, emails, hand-written notes, etc. could all be considered permanent records, depending on their content.

3. Do I need to organize the files in any way?

Whether dealing with paper or electronic records, the use of folders can help with organization.

For electronic records, consider making the highest-level folders correspond with the types of permanent records listed in the RDA. Then create sub-folders based on subject or another organizational approach that works for you. Whatever approach you use, consistency is key.

If your office uses a shared drive, ensure that you are saving records to the appropriate location. If multiple staff members work in the same folder on the shared drive, make sure that you use the same organizational and naming approach to avoid confusion.

4. For electronic files, do I need to name them in a certain way?

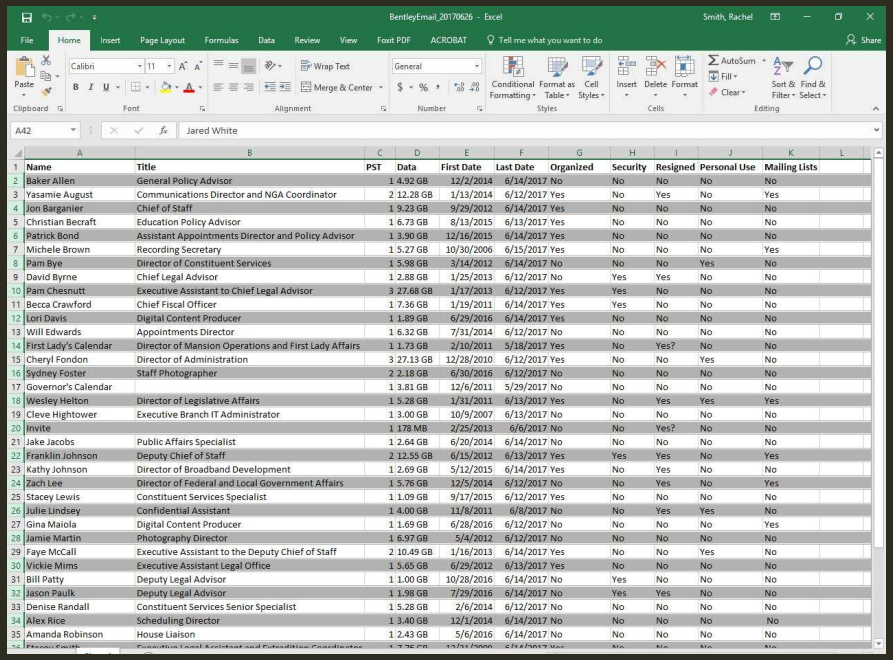
Following a few simple naming conventions makes electronic files easier to find and organize. It also helps protect the files for long-term preservation at the Archives. Use the following tips:

Choose descriptive but concise file names.

Avoid using special characters in file names, such as / \ : * ? " < > | [ ] & $, .

Use underscores instead of spaces in file names.

E-MAIL ANALYSIS



	Name	Title	PST	Data	First Date	Last Date	Organized	Security	Resigned	Personal Use	Mailing Lists
2	Baker Allen	General Policy Advisor	1	4.92 GB	12/2/2014	6/14/2017	No	No	No	No	No
3	Yasamie August	Communications Director and NGA Coordinator	2	12.28 GB	1/13/2014	6/12/2017	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
4	Jon Barganier	Chief of Staff	1	9.23 GB	9/29/2012	6/14/2017	Yes	No	No	No	No
5	Christian Becraft	Education Policy Advisor	1	6.73 GB	8/13/2015	6/13/2017	Yes	No	No	No	No
6	Patrick Bond	Assistant Appointments Director and Policy Advisor	1	3.90 GB	12/16/2015	6/14/2017	Yes	No	No	No	No
7	Michele Brown	Recording Secretary	1	5.27 GB	10/30/2006	6/15/2017	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
8	Pam Bye	Director of Constituent Services	1	5.98 GB	3/14/2012	6/14/2017	No	No	No	Yes	No
9	David Byrne	Chief Legal Advisor	1	2.88 GB	1/25/2013	6/12/2017	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
10	Pam Chesnutt	Executive Assistant to Chief Legal Advisor	3	27.68 GB	1/17/2013	6/12/2017	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
11	Becca Crawford	Chief Fiscal Officer	1	7.36 GB	1/19/2011	6/14/2017	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
12	Lori Davis	Digital Content Producer	1	1.89 GB	6/29/2016	6/14/2017	Yes	No	No	No	No
13	Will Edwards	Appointments Director	1	6.32 GB	7/31/2014	6/12/2017	No	No	No	No	No
14	First Lady's Calendar	Director of Mansion Operations and First Lady Affairs	1	1.73 GB	2/10/2011	5/18/2017	Yes	No	Yes?	No	No
15	Cheryl Fondon	Director of Administration	3	27.13 GB	12/28/2010	6/12/2017	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
16	Sydney Foster	Staff Photographer	2	2.18 GB	6/30/2016	6/12/2017	No	No	No	No	No
17	Governor's Calendar		1	3.81 GB	12/6/2011	5/29/2017	No	No	No	No	No
18	Wesley Helton	Director of Legislative Affairs	1	5.28 GB	1/31/2011	6/13/2017	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	Cleve Hightower	Executive Branch IT Administrator	1	3.00 GB	10/9/2007	6/13/2017	No	No	No	No	No
20	Invite		1	178 MB	2/25/2013	6/6/2017	No	No	Yes?	No	No
21	Jake Jacobs	Public Affairs Specialist	1	2.64 GB	6/20/2014	6/14/2017	No	No	No	No	No
22	Franklin Johnson	Deputy Chief of Staff	2	12.55 GB	6/15/2012	6/13/2017	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
23	Kathy Johnson	Director of Broadband Development	1	2.69 GB	5/12/2015	6/14/2017	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
24	Zach Lee	Director of Federal and Local Government Affairs	1	5.76 GB	12/5/2014	6/12/2017	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
25	Stacey Lewis	Constituent Services Specialist	1	1.09 GB	9/17/2015	6/12/2017	Yes	No	No	No	No
26	Julie Lindsey	Confidential Assistant	1	4.00 GB	11/8/2011	6/8/2017	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
27	Gina Maiola	Digital Content Producer	1	1.69 GB	6/28/2016	6/12/2017	No	No	No	No	Yes
28	Jamie Martin	Photography Director	1	6.97 GB	5/4/2012	6/12/2017	No	No	No	No	No
29	Faye McCall	Executive Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff	2	10.49 GB	1/16/2013	6/14/2017	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
30	Vickie Mims	Executive Assistant Legal Office	1	5.65 GB	6/29/2012	6/13/2017	Yes	No	No	No	No
31	Bill Patty	Deputy Legal Advisor	1	1.00 GB	10/28/2016	6/14/2017	No	Yes	No	No	No
32	Jason Paulk	Deputy Legal Advisor	1	1.98 GB	7/29/2016	6/14/2017	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
33	Denise Randall	Constituent Services Senior Specialist	1	5.28 GB	2/6/2014	6/12/2017	No	No	No	No	No
34	Alex Rice	Scheduling Director	1	3.40 GB	12/1/2014	6/14/2017	No	No	No	No	No
35	Amanda Robinson	House Liaison	1	2.43 GB	5/6/2016	6/14/2017	No	No	No	No	No

- Received 50 pst files representing 42 staff member accounts
- Reviewed the inboxes for
  - Date ranges
  - Organization system
  - Security concerns
  - Resignation information
  - Personal use
  - Mailing lists

CAPSTONE RECOMMENDATION

- Used the email analysis and survey responses to identify our capstone accounts
- Need to make it very clear to staff members which accounts will be retained moving forward

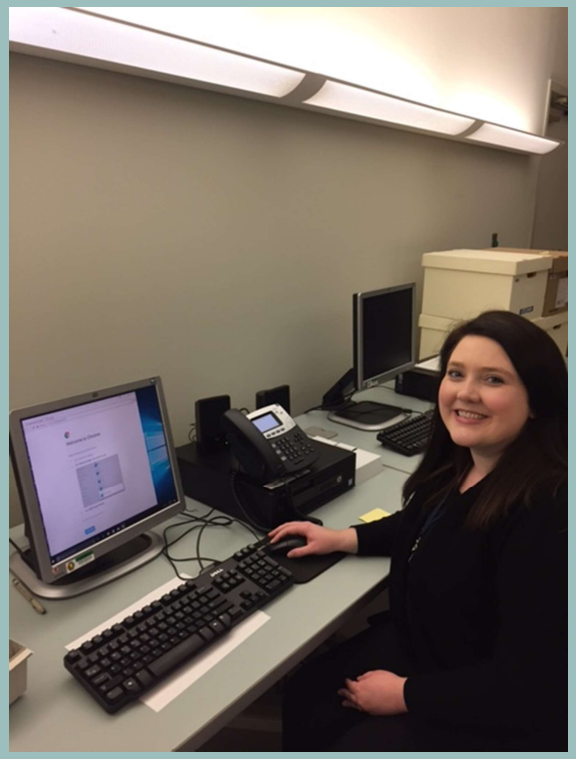
	A	B
1	**Office of the Governor Capstone Position Recommendation**	
2		
3	**Governor**	
4		
5	**Executive Suite**	
6	Executive Assistant(s) to the Governor	In the Bentley administration, this person handled reception-type duties. This designation assumes the assistant is not handling the majority of email for the Governor.
7	Confidential Assistant	In the Bentley administration, this person's account included copies of messages that could be found in other accounts, formatting of letters (transitory items), decorating-related items, and other items of non-permanent value.
8	Director of Federal & Local Government Affairs	Although not the head of a separate division, the person in this position served in a unique role, and their records should uniquely document the Alabama Governor office role in federal and local government affairs. In our survey, this person said that he did 99% of his work via email. As of August 2017, this position does not exist for the Ivey administration.
9		
10	**Chief of Staff**	
11	Chief of Staff	The COS is a significant leadership role in the Office of the Governor with management, coordination, and communication duties. In our survey, the person said that he did 99% of his work via email.
12	Admin. Assistant to the Chief of Staff	Recommend to keep as a backup source for COS-related items that went through her account instead of the COS directly.
13		
14	**Legal****	Access to any of this material is TBD.
15	Chief Legal Advisor	Core documentation related to activiites in the legal office.
16	Deputy Legal Advisor	
17	Deputy Legal Advisor	
18	Extradition Coordinator	
19	Executive Assistant to the Chief Legal Advisor	Core documentation related to activiites in the legal office.
20	Executive Assistant to the Legal Office	
21		

NEXT STEPS

- Working with a new records liaison
- Conducting records training at the end of the month
- Analyzing a second round of surveys
- Beginning to process the Bentley email records

CONCLUSION

- The survey was hard and took a long time
- But it provided real and lasting benefits



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